

REMARKS

In the Final Office Action, claims 31, 36, and 41 were objected to and claims 1-13 were rejected. By the present Response, Applicants have canceled claims 1-13 and amended claims 31, 36, and 41. Upon entry of the amendments, claims 31-43 will remain pending in the present patent application. Reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims are requested.

Claim Objections

As noted above, the Examiner objected to claims 31, 36, and 41 due to informalities. These informalities have been corrected by amendment and the claims are now consistent with the Examiner's suggestions. Even though they are made after a Final Office Action, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner enter these amendments since they are made to "comply[] with any requirement of form expressly set forth in a previous Office action." *See* 37 C.F.R. § 1.116(b)(1); *see also* MPEP 714.12.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner indicated that claims 31-43 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome objections set forth in the Final Office Action. As discussed above, in view of the Examiner's remarks, Applicants have amended independent claims 31, 36, and 41 to overcome the objections raised by the Examiner due to informalities. Accordingly, claims 31-43 are now believed to be in condition for allowance.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner also rejected claims 1-13 under U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,008,982 ("Smith"). This rejection is now moot because Applicants have canceled claims 1-13.

Conclusion

In view of the remarks and amendments set forth above, Applicants respectfully request allowance of the pending claims. If the Examiner believes that a telephonic interview will help speed this application toward issuance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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